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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0207  
INFO ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0011  
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000170

SIPDIS  
STATE FOR NEA/ARP  
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NEA/SA/EX/PMO  
LONDON FOR NEA WATCHER  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: OPIP KPAO KMDR MU  
SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

¶1. SUMMARY: This week in the Omani dailies, private Arabic language "Al Watan" accused Washington of protecting Israel in its attempt to delay the peace process. Arabic state daily "Oman", in turn, accused Israel of scuttling Washington's peace efforts by declaring settlement expansion. "Al Watan" also criticized the ICC's arrest warrant of the Sudanese president, calling the action a new form of colonialism. END SUMMARY.

"A NEW PATTERN OF EXCUSES"

¶2. On March 4, private Arabic daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) criticized Washington for protecting Israel and delaying peace efforts. According to "Until When Will American Excuses Continue?":

"The statements made by the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Israel show a new pattern of excuses used to protect Israel. The U.S. uses the excuse of Israeli security to evade regulations that prohibit supplying Israel with internationally banned weapons of mass destruction. When Washington talks about a permanent ceasefire, it is an excuse to avoid talking about ceasing the expansion of Israeli settlements. Does calling on Israel to stop expanding settlements threaten Israeli security? Why did not Hillary demand that Israelis open the borders? Why do American politicians wait while people in Palestine suffer under the embargo and blockade?"

"ANOTHER PLOT TO CRIPPLE U.S. EFFORTS"

¶3. On March 5, government Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) wrote that Israel's intention to expand settlements stymies U.S. efforts in the region. According to "Expanding Settlements Blocks any Possibility of Peace":

"Olmert's government has used the political situation to expand Israel's settlements and to announce demolition of dozens of homes, evicting 1500 Palestinian residents from Jerusalem. This announcement must be another plot to cripple the efforts of the new U.S. administration and Obama's envoy to the Middle East. Political uncertainty in Israel is posing more challenges to the Palestinians; they need to immediately unite their ranks and form a coalition government. This is essential not only to deal with aggressive Israeli practices, but also to push the U.S. administration to revitalize the peace process."

"A NEW TYPE OF COLONIALISM"

¶4. "Al Watan" On March 6 called the arrest warrant issued against Sudanese President Bashir an attempt to tear apart a country that is trying to reform itself. According to "Is it a New Type of Colonialism?":

"The horn of Africa and the Arab world have not yet recovered from the pain caused by the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the American invasion of Iraq. Even so, they are entering a new cycle of tension in the form of an arrest warrant against an Arab president. Is this a new type of colonialism that aims to destroy countries that are trying to heal? The decision to arrest the Sudanese President is a hostile action aimed at humiliating the Arabs and at weakening their independence and pride, not to mention that the resolution itself is a violation of the United Nations convention." HURTADO

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